



Memorandum

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: Stephen M. Haase
Albert Balagso

**SUBJECT: DELMAS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS
IMPROVEMENT PLAN** **DATE:** April 3, 2002

COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3

RECOMMENDATION

Staff advises the Planning Commission to recommend that the City Council: (1) approve the *Delmas Park Neighborhood Strong Neighborhoods Improvement Plan* as the City/community vision for the future of the Delmas Park area, (2) authorize the Administration to direct the City Departments and Agencies with implementation responsibilities to begin their respective activities, including the general oversight of the implementation of the *Plan* by the Redevelopment Agency, and (3) encourage the Delmas Park property owners, residents and community members to dedicate their time, energy and resources to implement the recommendations of the *Plan* and continue their community building activities.

BACKGROUND

Delmas Park Planning Area. The Delmas Park SNI area is located adjacent and to the west of downtown San Jose. It is bordered by West Santa Clara Street on the north, Interstate 280 on the south, State Route 87 on the east, and Bird Avenue on the west. The area is comprised of a mixture of low to medium density residential, commercial, and light industrial uses, with a new high-density residential development under construction. There are two distinct residential areas within the Delmas Park neighborhood comprised of houses that were originally built in the early 1900s.

The northern residential area, bounded roughly by Los Gatos Creek to the west, West San Fernando Street to the north, SR 87 to the east, and Park Avenue to the south, boasts many older homes with distinct characteristics associated with architecture of the early 1900s. Many of these homes have been rehabilitated and are well maintained by property owners. In addition, the Parkside Condominiums were built in the mid-1980s as a complementary multi-family housing project and are considered a community asset. The southern residential area, located in the portion of the planning area that is south of San Carlos Street, is comprised of mostly single-

family, single-story homes that were built in the early 1900s. However, there is a predominance of auto-related services and industrial uses mixed in with the residential uses due to the light industrial zoning of most of the neighborhood. The Pensione Esperanza is located in this part of the neighborhood near Bird Avenue and Columbia Street. The Pensione is a relatively new SRO that includes a community room where many of the NAC meetings were held. The Delmas Park neighborhood contains no public community facilities such as a park or community center.

Delmas Park Neighborhoods Planning Process and Participation. During the preparation of the *Plan*, City staff and the planning consultants worked with community members and a 6-member Neighborhood Advisory Committee (NAC). The group met 12 times from December of 2000 through February 2002. Although the NAC was a small group, they were very involved in the development of the *Plan*, and supported by another small group of dedicated community members who also attended and participated in most meetings. Two community workshops were held, the first in April of 2001 and the second in February of 2002. The second workshop was well attended and community members that participated expressed excitement about and support for the content of the *Plan*.

The Delmas Park Neighborhood Association represents the neighborhood. The association was formed during the SNI planning process and has focused largely on neighborhood beautification and safety issues through a community clean-up, an open space beautification project, and a newsletter created to help inform all residents in the community about neighborhood activities and issues.

ANALYSIS

Purposes of the Plan. The purpose of the *Delmas Park Neighborhood Improvement Plan* is to document the community's vision for their neighborhood, to identify the community's specific goals and objectives for improving the area, and to provide the City, Redevelopment Agency and various neighborhood stakeholders with a clear guide for the revitalization of the area.

Vision. Stakeholders in the Delmas Park area crafted a vision for the future of their neighborhood where:

- The neighborhood becomes more pedestrian- and transit-oriented;
- Commercial corridors become more neighborhood-focused;
- Existing residential areas are protected and enhanced;
- Light industrial and auto service land uses are phased out and replaced with development that complements adjacent homes;
- On-street parking is preserved for residents;
- Regular street sweeping keeps streets clean and attractive;
- Sensitive infill development increases the diversity of the residential population;
- New housing opportunities are created for seniors and residents with a variety of income levels;
- Residential support services such as a day-care facility, teen center, and/or senior center, are incorporated as feasible with new development;

- New neighborhood mini-parks complement nearby open spaces at Discovery Meadow and Guadalupe River Park; and
- The West San Carlos Street commercial corridor is revitalized to become a vibrant and comfortable neighborhood district.

Draft Plan. Over the course of the planning process, community members discussed many actions and policies that could bring positive changes to the area. The Action Plan is comprised of those Action Items selected by community members as the best means for achieving the community's shared vision for the future.

A. The "Top Ten" Priority Actions. The "Top Ten" Priority Actions represent the short list of priority actions that the community selected as having the greatest potential for positive impact. Priority actions were chosen by community members at a workshop in May 2001 and are ranked in order of importance:

1. Improve residential parking conditions
2. Create a neighborhood traffic plan
3. Modify current land use policies
4. Improve West San Carlos Street streetscape
5. Improve Gifford Avenue streetscape
6. Improve Auzerai Avenue streetscape
7. Improve the general condition of streets and sidewalks
8. Improve the pedestrian route to Gardner Academy and Biebrach Park
9. Mitigate neighborhood noise levels
10. Develop neighborhood parks

B. Other Improvement Actions. The entire Action Plan is presented as a matrix, which includes the above "Top Ten" Priority Actions plus many additional items totaling 21 Action Items. Following are some highlights from the scope of the full Action Plan, organized around general headings:

1. Neighborhood Circulation and Parking. Community members seek to redirect through-traffic from residential streets to arterials and collectors, to mitigate overflow parking on residential streets, and to improve pedestrian connections to adjacent areas and facilities. Three of the "Top 10" items are included in this general category, and additional Action Items in the *Plan* include increasing pedestrian and bicycle safety at adjacent freeways, and establishing bike routes along Park, West San Carlos, and Bird/Montgomery.
2. Neighborhood Conditions and Maintenance. Community members seek to improve the overall appearance and condition of the neighborhood by cleaning up, beautifying, and improving the safety in areas of the neighborhood. Five of the "Top Ten" Action items are part of this general category. Other examples from the full Action Plan include improving neighborhood lighting and street sweeping, and improving various neighborhood streetscapes including Park, Bird/Montgomery, and West San Fernando.

3. Neighborhood Revitalization. Community members seek to revitalize their neighborhood through changes to existing land use policies, development of new infill housing that is sensitive to adjacent residential development, and promoting commercial and residential redevelopment along West San Carlos Street. Improving West San Carlos is the #4 Action Item of the Plan. Another supporting Action Item is to establish neighborhood design guidelines specific to the neighborhood to ensure that new development and redevelopment is complementary to the existing residential neighborhood.
4. Neighborhood Open Space. Community members are in support of open space development in their neighborhood. The *Plan* and the community recognize that the development of small, public open spaces may occur as part of new development or on one of several vacant parcels identified in the *Plan*.

Issues of particular note.

Coordination with other planning and redevelopment efforts. Due to an overlap of the Delmas Park Plan area and the Diridon/Arena Strategic Plan area, the *Plan* was developed in coordination with the San Jose Redevelopment Agency. The Diridon/Arena Strategic Plan is being led by SJRA for the portion of the Delmas Park neighborhood located north of Park Avenue and to the north and west of the Delmas Park planning area boundaries near the existing Diridon Station and Compaq Center. The Delmas Park Neighborhood Plan includes action items relative to Park Avenue and West San Fernando streetscape improvements. The improvement of these two streets, which are also included in the boundaries of the Diridon/Arena planning area, are not included in the Delmas Park Top Ten. However, the recommended improvements to these streets could be completed as part of the implementation of the Diridon/Arena Strategic Plan.

Land Use Policy Changes

In the Delmas Park area, there are substantial inconsistencies among existing uses, General Plan designations, zoning districts, and community objectives for future land uses.

- a. *Residential Development Densities.* The General Plan land use designation for most of the Delmas Park SNI planning area is “Residential Support for the Core.” This General Plan designation requires all new housing in the Delmas Park area to be a minimum of 25 dwelling units to the acre with no upper limit. The *Plan* recommends that the General Plan designations be revised in this area to lower the residential density in solidly residential areas and to allow higher density residential development in the area of the neighborhood closest to West San Carlos Street. The lowering of the residential densities in intact residential areas would help protect the existing homes, some with potential historic significance, and would focus high-density development in the areas where it is most appropriate.
- b. *Zoning issues.* The Delmas Park neighborhood was originally developed as a single-family, residential neighborhood. With the establishment of the City’s first zoning ordinance in 1929, the area was zoned for light industrial uses. This has resulted in the establishment of auto-related services and industrial uses in an area that has a

strong residential character. It is not uncommon to find auto body shops surrounded by single-family homes, particularly in the portion of the neighborhood located south of San Carlos Street. The *Plan* calls for the rezoning of selected properties to help prevent new and expanded uses that are inconsistent with the General Plan and community objectives.

Revitalization of West San Carlos Street. The Plan identifies the revitalization of West San Carlos Street as a high priority. There is currently a high-density mixed-use project under construction on the north side of West San Carlos, and a small office building was recently constructed on the south side. The Delmas Park NAC has expressed enthusiastic support for the development of high density housing and neighborhood-serving commercial uses along West San Carlos, with the hope that some of the existing businesses will be preserved and enhanced through façade improvements.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The *Plan* was developed in close coordination with residents and property and business owners of the Delmas Park neighborhood through more than one year of monthly Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings and two community workshops. All property owners, residents, and business owners within the Delmas Park area were invited to the community workshops through postcard mailers, flyers, and PRNS and PBCE contacts. Community members actively participated in each phase of the planning process.

COORDINATION

The preparation of the *Plan* was coordinated with the Council Office, the City Manager's Office, and various Departments and Agencies, including the Departments of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement; Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services; Transportation; Public Works; and Police as well as the Redevelopment Agency and the Valley Transportation Authority.

CEQA

An addendum was prepared to the San Jose 2020 General Plan Environmental Impact Report which was previously certified on August 16, 1994 by the City Council (Resolution Number 65459).

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